



Fall Flight Auto Tour Loop

Auto tour loop road ■



Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

LAS VEGAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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Photo: J. & K. Hollingsworth

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Welcome to Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge. This 4 ½ mile self-guided auto tour route meanders through native mixed grass prairie grasslands, past lakes, ponds, marshes and croplands that serve as important habitat for a multitude of migratory birds. In order to protect wildlife on the refuge, this tour route is open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sundays during the peak fall migration in November.

The 8,672 acre Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1965 by the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Migratory birds following the Central Flyway rest and refuel here, while other species such as bald eagles and sandhill cranes spend the winter. Several species of ducks, including blue-winged and cinnamon teal, gadwall, ruddy ducks, and northern pintails nest on the Refuge, as do Canada geese, avocets and long-billed curlews. In addition to the over 270 species of birds supported by the refuge, a variety of other wildlife inhabit the Refuge, including pronghorn antelope, mule deer, coyote and the occasional black bear.

This guide provides supplemental information to the general refuge brochure; it is also keyed to marked observation points along the drive. If you wish to stop along the roadside, park in a manner that will not obstruct traffic, and stay near your vehicle so that you do not frighten or disturb the wildlife. Please drive carefully and observe the following rules and regulations:

- Speed limit is 10 miles per hour.
- Traffic is one way.
- All pets MUST remain inside your vehicle.
- Firearms and intoxicating substances are prohibited.

MELTON POND: The bulrush growing around the edge of this pond was planted by refuge staff to provide birds with extra cover and protection. The man made island you see serves as an important nesting and roosting area for birds.

BENTLEY LAKE: The refuge is the largest shareholder in the Storrie Project Water User Association, a local irrigation group. A canal from Storrie Lake supplies Bentley Lake with water. Through a series of water control structures, the refuge distributes the water to other lakes, farm fields and moist soil management areas. As you drive to Goose Island Lake, notice the canal and lateral ditches used to deliver water.

GOOSE ISLAND LAKE: Areas of submerged vegetation and floating pondweed invite a host of ducks and coots to feed in this lake. Numerous invertebrates (small animals that lack a spinal column – like insects and crustaceans) also inhabit this area. American pronghorn can often be seen on the far edge of the lake and in the grasslands beyond.

WALLACE LAKE: This lake was originally a “playa” or natural surface depression which held water in wet seasons but remained dry for most of the year. Natural playas flood in years of plentiful water and during runoff. In response to the seasonal availability of water, seeds and invertebrates which remain dormant in dry times, grow rapidly. Due to a decreasing natural flooding, the Refuge has turned this and other areas into permanent wetlands.

COYOTE POND: The islands you see here were built in 1988 and are used by ducks, geese and other migratory birds as safe

nesting areas away from predators like coyotes and raccoons. The grasses and other plants growing on the islands provide additional cover, protecting the nests from egg-robbing birds like crows and black-crowned night herons.

CRANE LAKE: Crane Lake is the largest body of water on the refuge (McAlister Lake is managed by the State). Diving ducks – such as redheads, ring-necked, buffleheads and ruddy ducks – are often seen resting in the middle of the lake, while dabbling ducks – like mallards, gadwalls, widgeons and shovelers – are usually feeding near the shore. Lake banks are a favorite spot for sandhill cranes. On the west side of Crane Lake is an observation deck that is open year round.

CROPLANDS: The end of the route passes through some of the Refuge farm fields. Wheat, peas, barley and clover are planted to meet the foraging requirements of migratory birds and resident wildlife. Geese and cranes are common here; also watch for deer feeding in these fields.



Photo: Northern Pintail, USFWS